

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-25 (cancelled)

Claim 26 (new): A method for using a computer running a computer-aided-design (CAD) tool to enforce a usage contract for the CAD tool, the method comprising:

entering a trigger condition from the usage contract into the computer; and

generating a payment request when a data file generated by the CAD tool satisfies the trigger condition.

Claim 27 (new): The method of Claim 26, wherein generating the payment request comprises sending a payment to a vendor of the CAD tool as part of a transaction that generates the data file.

Claim 28 (new): The method of Claim 26, wherein generating the payment request comprises disabling a set of features of the CAD tool.

Claim 29 (new): The method of Claim 26, wherein generating the payment request comprises adding a watermark to the data file for identifying the data file as having been produced by the CAD tool.

Claim 30 (new): The method of Claim 29, wherein the watermark comprises at least one of non-functional data, a naming convention, a spacing convention, an ordering convention, and non-functional elements.

Claim 31 (new): The method of Claim 26, wherein the CAD tool comprises an integrated circuit (IC) design tool.

Claim 32 (new): The method of Claim 31, wherein the data file

has a form of at least one of hardware description language (HDL), register transfer level description (RTL), a macro, a hard macro, a soft macro, a core, a hard core, a soft core, a net-list, a synthesizable net-list, a layout, a process-independent layout, and a process-dependent layout.